

Rate Ammunition Industry Safe

Ammunition production is one of America's safest industries, and it's getting safer every day, according to statistics of the National Safety Council and information released Tuesday by the Ordnance Ammunition Center in Joliet.

In 1952, working in one of the Army's 22 principal ammunition plants was considered safe, according to Arsenal officials.

One of these 22 plants is Joliet Arsenal, commanded by Col. Ronald B. Currens, the Kankakee Unit of the Arsenal is operated for the Ordnance Corps by the United States Rubber Company and the Elwood Unit is Government operated.

Directed by Brig. Gen. W. E. Laidlaw, OAC commander, these 22 plants turn out nearly all the artillery shells, rockets, bombs, mines, and grenades produced in the U. S. More than \$200 million worth of ammunition per month is now pouring out of them to U. S. troops here and abroad, to NATO nations, and to U. S. storage points.

ALL EXCEPT two of the plants are operated, under Ordnance Corps supervision, by civilian firms holding fixed-fee contracts. Half of the 22 are explosives works, where propellant and high-explosive powders are made. Except for one ammunition proving ground, the rest are loading plants, where finished ammunition is turned out.

About 75,000 workers were employed at these installations last year, and only six workers lost their lives in accidents attributable to explosives. Three other fatalities occurred, but these were in "industrial accidents".

Lost-time injuries—ranging from one-day cases to permanent impairments—were incurred by 311 other workers in the 22 ammunition plants last year. Of the 311 accidents, however, only 21 were connected with explosives, and the remaining 290 happened in common industrial accidents.

THE ACCIDENT-FREQUENCY rate in the ammunition industry has been decreasing steadily in the past seven years, according to an arsenal spokesman. In 1946 it

6.7 lost-time injuries occurred for every million man-hours worked. By 1951, this had dropped to 2.5 and in 1952 the rate was only 2.1 injuries per million man-hours.

In 1951 the 38,000 employees in the 22 ammunition plants worked a total of 76 million man-hours and suffered 191 injuries, including six fatalities. In 1952, the number of workers increased to 75,000 and the man-hours worked to 153 million, but the injuries (including the nine fatalities) increased to only 320.

The safety of the ammunition industry can be illustrated by assuming that one of these plants employed 7,200 workers in 1952 and that this particular plant was "average," among the 22, from a safety standpoint. This would mean, then, that of the 7,200 workers, only 31 would incur lost-time injuries, and one of these would be a fatality. If this were an average industrial plant, 125 workers would have had lost-time injuries.